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Don't Lose Your Independence This Independence Day: Avoid a DUI

While Independence Day is a time to celebrate our country's freedoms and traditions in the form of fireworks, backyard barbecues, picnics and parades, the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) reminds you to participate in the fun and festivities safely and responsibly. Sadly, the July Fourth holiday is statistically one of the most dangerous times of the year for DUI-related crashes and deaths.

During last year's four-day Fourth of July holiday, 17 people were killed and 430 injured in alcohol-involved crashes.

"Impaired-driving deaths are 100 percent preventable by planning ahead and finding a safe way home when leaving a party or event," OTS Director Rhonda L. Craft said. "Don't put others, and yourself, at risk by driving impaired."

Law enforcement agencies across the state will be deploying additional officers on DUI Driver's License checkpoints and Saturation Patrols to stop and arrest drivers suspected of alcohol or drug impairment. OTS aims to educate all drivers that "DUI Doesn't Just Mean Booze." If you take prescription drugs, particularly those with a driving or operating machinery warning label, you may be impaired enough to get a DUI. Marijuana can also be impairing and result in a DUI, especially in combination with alcohol or other drugs.

To help ensure a safe Fourth of July holiday, OTS offers these tips for a safe ride home:

- Designate a sober driver.
- Take a taxi, ride-share service like Uber and Lyft or use public transportation. You can also look up sober ride programs using the National Directory of Designated Driver Services (NDDDS) at <http://bit.ly/DDServices>.
- Have a friend or family member who is about to drive after consuming alcohol, marijuana or prescription drugs? Take the keys away and make arrangements to get them home safely.
- Report drunk drivers - call 911.

Volunteering as a designated sober driver? Our designated driver VIP ("DDVIP") program partners with bars and restaurants to offer non-alcoholic specialty drinks for DDs, among other deals: <http://bit.ly/OTSDDrinks>.

To learn more about DDVIP and other OTS awareness, education and enforcement campaigns, visit www.ots.ca.gov, as well as our Facebook and Twitter pages: <https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS/> and https://twitter.com/OTS_CA?lang=en.

Whether by bike, car, motorcycle or walking, be a part of the solution and 'Go Safely California.'